ANNEX "A," Subparagraph 1a, Sociological Background

GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE SOCIETY

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The Magyar culture, as it has developed through the years, has a threefold source: East European, Germanic, and Oriental; nevertheless these people have succeeded in molding the differing elements into something of their own — a national culture. Hungary has been termed the only genuine "melting pot" of modern Europe where the new racial and cultural elements assimilated themselves with great rapidity and to a remarkable degree. Their mere survival is the best witness to the deep attachment of the Magyars to their own culture, for during their history they have never been able to relax their struggle to survive as a nation against both armed and peaceful penetrations by neighbors on all sides. As a nation they are consciously conservative — as they have had to be to maintain their existence as a nation in a sea of Germanic and Slavic peoples — but the present government of Hungary does not seem to have taken into account this fairly general national tendency.

The Magyars live today under Communist dictatorship within the borders of an economically almost "impracticable" state, in a society which, due to its very instability, is very difficult to describe. No society can ever be called fully stable, but contemporary Hungary has had more than its

181 share of upheavals and yet no one has ever evaluated scientifically the total impact of the complex social, political and economic changes of the last 100 years upon the Hungarians.

178 The material factors of civilization have obviously changed within this period and continue to change in front of our eyes. Even a partial industrialization was a relatively late phenomenon in Hungary. The country was the granary of the Austro-Hungarian Empire for centuries, and not before the second half of the nineteenth century can we consider industry in Hungary in the modern sense. After World War I, dismembered Hungary fell back on an almost entirely agricultural economy. Public efforts to adapt the country's economy to the changed geographic conditions were undertaken, aiming at the establishment of new types of industry corresponding to the new conditions. Mechanization of agriculture was still in a rudimentary state. After World War II, the official economic emphasis in the country fell upon the development of heavy industry and the collectivization and mechanization of agriculture, [369] as taught by Lenin and Stalin. Meanwhile, technological progress has not only attracted peasants to the cities but, with the new media of mass communication, it brought forth the village from its secular isolation and began to spread elements of urban culture among the peasants. During the same period, the boundaries of the state, overlooking minor readjustments of the

178 borderline, changed at least four times; two world wars were fought in the country and masses of refugees were displaced; two revolutions shook the society; and three foreign occupations occurred -- the last one still in force. Such changes could generate nothing but instability of the population.

181 The culture of Hungary today seems to be no longer of a purely agricultural but rather of a mixed type of economy in which agriculture is still predominant. It is an intention of the present regime to swing the emphasis from agriculture to industry, but the success of this endeavor depends a great deal on how much economic co-operation the Hungarian regime will receive from the countries it now depends upon from the point of view of raw materials, especially the Soviet Union.

565 181 Peasant society, like the rest of the population, is unstable. The motives dominating the Magyar peasant are complex and it is difficult to affirm that any of them clearly dominates the other. The economic motives are strong and an important cause of social unrest roots still in the fact that the poor peasants, of whom many work in the kolkhozy, cannot be assured of even a passable living standard in spite of certain relatively small financial favors the regime extends to them, while utterly exploiting the richer peasants. Most scholars interested in Magyar culture agree, however, that economic motives do not suffice to explain the Magyar peasantry which,

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unlike the peasantry of Western Europe, is not only an economic status but a way of life. Among the economic motives which help determine the attitude of the Magyars may be listed also the peasants' widespread resistance to the power which stripped them of their old manner of living and their economic independence, however meager it was, and forced them into the collective farms where they receive wages in the form of crop shares which they consider debasing.

One could generalize that the Magyar peasant society is unstable but hostilely united — at least potentially — against their present government.

To sum up different opinions on Hungary, the Magyars are believed to 181 be conservative, individualistic, romantic, easily aroused to enthusiasm, gallant, possessing a high degree of sensibilité, amenable to advice by kind words, politically oligarchic and aggressive.

The Magyar peasants are reported not to be exempt from what are believed 181 565 to be general peasant qualities: dourness, hardness and suspicion. However, they seem to differ from their likes in other countries insofar as they are reported to be prouder, less docile, more generous, less thrifty and less hard working than the Middle European peasants as a whole: their social life seems to be narrower for they are no "joiners" and care little, unlike their German counterparts, for associations, clubs or authority. Their social life

181 565 is intensive in depth, but it is limited mostly to the family circle, taken here in the broader sense.

181 208 In their approach to national problems, the Hungarians seem to be predominantly romantic, irrational, and thus easily influenced by the right kind of propaganda. Any policy which employs a slogan easily adaptable to the conservative and retrospective frame of mind of the Hungarian peasant has hope for success, and once a slogan of this kind catches on, compromise on the part of the public is not to be feared. Two world wars have shown that the Hungarians, once convinced theirs is a righteous mission, will fight to the end even when their cause seems hopeless. The present regime does everything possible to take advantage of this tenacity. Beginning with statements about the early communistic tribal organization of the primitive Magyars, Communist propaganda tries hard to make a chain of all the facts of Hungarian history which can be interpreted as pointing to the present regime as the "fulfillment of a glorious past." It would seem, however, that the facts of history are too well known and their memories of their treatment as a conquered people are too fresh for them to be too swayed by Communist propaganda.

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562 Among the many children's games, the girls prefer group games, singing and dancing. They also play with dolls. Boys often play alone with crude toys such as corncobs or plants which imitate weapons or agricultural implements.

178 There is little to say about how certain customs might influence, favorably or unfavorably, the Magyars' acceptance of Western techniques. An industrial revolution imposed by the Communists is now taking place in the country, transforming ancient methods of production, mechanizing agriculture and making the population increasingly aware of the
000 importance of industrialization for the entire national economy. What the Hungarians may have to learn in the future are not the techniques themselves, but the ways of infusing these techniques with the spirit of free enterprise and democratic co-operation.

The problem of acceptance and assimilation of Western political ideas is a more complex one and should be dealt with by his-
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565 torians and political analyists rather than by ethnographers. From the point of view of the folklorist, however, one could venture to say that the attitude of the Magyars toward social problems--as vaguely perceptible in the folk tales--is a patriarchally democratic

one, highly individualistic but, at the same time, respecting fair play. They would be alive to democracy based on Christian virtues and a liberal economy. Among the Magyars there has long been, on the other hand, an awareness of the necessity of struggle for independence and of warring against either Eastern or Western infiltration. This struggle is represented by many Hungarian historical characters, now subjects of legends and folk tradition which inspire the Magyar peasant with some mistrust of foreigners in general.

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The Magyar peasants, like peasants in other countries are conservative and susticious of change. This is why the present Communist regime in Hungary finds its greatest obstacle in the villages, and this attitude will have to be accounted for in any propaganda directed toward them. This, of course, does not mean that anything retrospective would appeal to them simply for conservativism's sake. For instance, they would obviously not care for the abolishment of the land reform of 1945 just because this would mean a return to a pre-war status; on the other hand, they would certainly appreciate the abolition of the present collective farming system.

Conservatism necessarily implies a respect for authority which is indeed present among the Magyar peasants, albeit not to the extent

181 that one would find it among their German counterparts. The authority
565 has to be a traditionally established one, enjoying a high prestige, in order to win their respect.

554 The most effective stimulus motivating behavior seems to be prestige. Prestige, in turn, is largely based on wealth as well as
626 on age and experience and other minor factors. The sanctions inhibiting behavior are ostracism and legal punishments. Ostracism is a traditionally instituted and formally well-defined procedure in the village; there are numerous more or less rude methods and even ceremonies of ostracism (c.f. Szendrey, "Népi büntető szokások" in Ethnographia, XLVII, 65). Nowadays, ostracism and legal punishment exert their influences in opposite directions. The resources of Communist power are practically inexhaustible since this power rests on a totalitarian political system. Reports show, none the less, that ostracism is being successfully carried out against peasants collaborating with the local Communist authorities.

7: Jassi S-4, 5 (no date) 1946 EC1 Hungary EC1

Society, often called the Hungarian Fabians, under the leadership of a first-class philosopher, Julius Pikler, worked hard on the problem of reconciliation between Socialism and freedom. This orientation toward the west was so outspoken that often the better elements of the old feudal society became real Anglomaniacs, introducing, even though superficially, the English concept of the gentleman. This approach was cordially reciprocated by many representatives of the English aristocracy.

Finally must be noted the special character of the Hungarian people: a sober, hard-working, extremely intelligent ethnic group, remarkably free from the mysticism and the extreme racial fanaticism of the Slavs and the Rumanians.

More recent historical events added to the cleavage between Hungary and the Balkan countries. Feudalism, helped by representatives of the western democracies, was soon successful in undermining the democratic republic set up under Károlyi. The ensuing Communistic revolution followed a pure Russian world-revolutionary model, with chaotic experiments in socialization, dreams of the *sovkhozes*, and occasional hysterical outbursts of terrorism. It was short-lived, but it made a deep impression on Hungary's conservative soul. And in spite of the fact that very soon a much bloodier and more inhuman White Terror supplanted the Red (under the secret leadership of Admiral Horthy), the great majority of the people became immune to the Bolshevik virus. Thereafter nobody ever wished to renew the orthodox patterns of Russian Communism. The messianic dream of Bolshevism had lost its strength; and it has not revived.

Indeed, not only has it lost its hold on the minds of the masses, but it has faded even in the minds of the Communist leaders. The many Hungarian Communist exiles in Moscow witnessed quite a strange ideology in operation in the promised land. The Soviet schools no longer trained them in the Leninist religion of hundred percent Communism and immediate world revolution, but in a ruthless *Realpolitik* imbued with the spirit of Stalin. They came to look on the many mistakes of Béla Kun's revolutionary fantasy in a cool, detached and critical temper; and returning to the old country at the close of this war, and to its splendid, gay capital, now completely in ruins and in the grip of acute famine, they saw clearly that the old heroic methods of unmitigated Communism should not be applied again. Only recently the best mind among

11: Karolyi E-4, 5 (no date) 1931? EC1 Hungary EC1

535 and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries were the Hungarian aristocrats — many of whom were newly settled and richly endowed foreigners — gradually attracted to the Royal and Imperial Court of Vienna. Throughout history, and even today, the landed Hungarian nobleman spends his life on his estate among the peasantry, and their lives are bound together by the same national feeling and the same material interests. We have a great many recordings in various sources of the fact that the Hungarian noblemen often took part in the celebrations of the common folk, and even *vice versa*. Our sources disclose that they participated in each other's dances with natural ease. We can see from this that not only throughout Hungarian history, but even in the various social strata of Hungarian society, the Hungarian dance has always been essentially the same. Few nations of Europe have had as restless a history as Hungary so it is all the more surprising that its original institutions have been kept and developed up to our days in such a straight line.

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We have described the Hungarian folk-dance closely and dealt at length with its origin, its spirit, and its identity. What has been said above throws some light upon the sentimental and psychological role of dancing in Hungarian history. Let us now look further into the various phases of its role in Hungary's national existence and attempt to trace its physical development.

[181] We know that the Hungarians were a race of warriors, horsemen from among the best; proud, impulsive, gay, and human. These characteristics are always apparent in the original Hungarian dances, even today, when horseback riding is not so universal as it used to be, and in